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ABSTRACT

A study examined primary-grade children's ability to construct felicitous, or audience-accommodating, character introductions in their stories. The study was intended to (1) describe the linguistic variation children employed in character introductions; (2) identify cognitive factors other than egocentrism contributing to infelicitous introductions; and (3) determine the significance of development across time, mode, choice, and linguistic function. Character introductions were identified in the oral retellings and "made up" dictated and written stories of 36 children collected in the spring of grade 1, fall of grade 2, and spring of grade 2. The qualitative portion of the analysis showed that children have implicit knowledge of the range of linguistic variation available for character introductions and that they make use of this knowledge even though it often leads to ambiguous introductions. Results also indicated that felicitous character introductions are more difficult to achieve in retellings than in "made up" stories, and that different interpretations of literacy tasks affect the likelihood of felicitous character introductions. The quantitative analysis indicated that even though construction of felicitous character introductions increased over time, the increase was affected by the mode of communication us?' in the task and children's growing ability to coordinate multiple narrative functions within an introductory clause. The findings support the view that language development cannot be analyzed as a step-wise addition of skills but must be analyzed as a dynamic process involving interactions between multiple social, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions. (HTH)

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CREATING CONTEXT WITHIN TEXT:

AN INVESTIGATION OF PRIMARY-GRADE CHILDREN'S

CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS IN STORIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined primary-grade children's ability to construct felicitous, or audience-accommodating, character introductions in their stories. Character introductions were identified in the oral retellings and "made up" dictated and written stories of thirty-six children collected at Spring Grade 1, Fall Grade 2, and Spring Grade 2. The goals of the study were three-fold: (1) to describe the linguistic variation children employed in character introductions; (2) to identify cognitive factors other than egocentrism contributing to infelicitous introductions; and (3) to determine the significance of development (Spring Grade 1, Fall Grade 2, Spring Grade 2), mode (oral, written), choice ("made up," retelling), and linguistic function (simple presentation representing one narrative function, complex presentation representing multiple narrative functions). Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used.

The qualitative portion of the analysis showed (1) that children have implicit knowledge of the range of linguistic variation available for character introductions and that they make use of this knowledge even though it often leads to ambiguous introductions; (2) that felicitous character introductions are more difficult to achieve in retellings than in "made up" stories; (3) that different interpretations of literacy tasks affect the likelihood of felicitous character introductions. The quantitative analysis indicated that even though construction of felicitous character introductions increased over time, the increase was affected by the mode of communication used in the task and children's growing ability to coordinate multiple narrative functions within an introductory clause. The findings support the view that language development cannot be analyzed as a step-wise addition of skills but must be analyzed as a dynamic process involving interactions between multiple social, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions.

Children's first messages, illustrated by Bloom's (1970) classic example of the phrase "Mommy sock," are interpreted primarily from clues found in the physical context of the speech event, accompanying gestures and behaviors, and shared knowledge of experiences and intentions (Cook-Gumperz, 1977; Donaldson, 1978). With development, however, more of the meaning is encoded in the linguistic channel, and language becomes less dependent on a contextual crutch and, therefore, more autonomous. Although a progressive movement from context-dependent language to autonomous language occurs, this progression does not indicate the replacement of the former by the latter; rather the process is better described as broadening the ability to express meaning in a variety of situations. Children become more adept at communicating meaning in ordinary face-to-face conversations (situations usually characterized by context-dependent language) as well as in expressing meaning in situations such as writing in which participants are separated in time and space and share only "common" knowledge (situations usually requiring autonomous language).

As long as children speak only of ongoing events found in the immediate situation, context-dependent language is adequate. But children's functional needs for communication expand to include talking and eventually writing about non-current events, either real or imagined. This functional broadening results in the need for language with a greater degree of autonomy. And autonomous language entails new linguistic and cognitive demands. No longer can children depend on shared knowledge with the audience or on contextual supports. Instead, the success of these communication events depends on children's abilities to recognize the more demanding informational needs of the audience and to construct a coherent message using primarily the linguistic channel. The developmental importance of this language function is underscored by recent theoretical links between the ability to interpret and construct autonomous text and school success (Cook-Gumperz, 1977; Olson & Torrance, 1981).

One aspect of children's growing ability to create autonomous text centers on their ability to verbally construct the context of an event (the who, what, when, and where) within the parameters of the text rather than assuming such information to be part of the audience's knowledge base. The present study examines children's developing ability to verbally present one component of a story's context--its characters.

Halliday (1973) argues that integrating multiple language functions into a single utterance is preceded developmentally by using an utterance to represent only one function. This phenomenon translated to the development of children's ability to construct character introductions implies that clauses serving solely to introduce a character (e.g., Once upon a time there was a duck) are cognitively less difficult to construct than clauses serving multifunctions (e.g., A duck was walking down the path). Therefore, in this study a distinction was made between introductory clauses which were simple (unifunctional) and introductory clauses which were complex (multifunctional).

Related Studies of Children's Autonomous Text

Studies of young children's constructed messages in situations requiring autonomous text have shown that success in creating easily interpreted text is influenced by various factors. Gradual loss of an egocentric perspective is the developmental interpretation offered by many. Warden (1976) analyzed the verbal constructions of children ages three to nine and adults in two different speech events, both requiring autonomous language. In one situation subjects were asked to describe a simple action to a blindfolded experimenter; in the second situation, subjects were asked to orally relate a wordless cartoon strip to a listener unable to see the cartoon. Warden reported that only the nine year olds and adults were proficient at using audience-accommodating indefinite introductory phrases. Warden concluded that the consistent use of the indefinite phrases by the older subjects reflected a recognition of the informational needs of the message receiver. He explained that the younger children were unable to acknowledge these informational needs due to an egocentric perspective.

Maratsos (1976) in a study of preschool children's use of the English article system, found that only the "most able" four year olds were able to linguistically adjust to situations in which the knowledge of the speaker and listener differed. He also concluded that the appropriate use of indefinite introductory phrases was motivated by a non-egocentric perspective. Interestingly, both Warden and Maratsos reported some indefinite initial references in the language of their youngest subjects. If this finding is interpreted within the outlined framework, it must be concluded that even the youngest children show signs of non-egocentric language but that the autonomy of their language is variable with respect to situational and/or content factors.

King and Rentel (1982) and Cox and Sulzby (1984) have identified mode of communication as a factor contributing to the context-dependent nature of children's texts. King and Rentel's longitudinal analysis of first and second grade dictated and written "made up" stories showed a general decrease over time in inappropriate references to non-textual antecedents, references they referred to as exophoric. They noted, however, that the decrease was more marked for stories in the written mode than for dictated stories. This finding suggests that although inappropriate exophora decreased in general with development, more difficulty was encountered in the written mode than in the oral mode. Considering the newness of the written mode to the subjects and the transcription skills (e.g., spelling, handwriting) required in this mode, it is no surprise that there was more room for improvement within the written task than within the dictation task.

Cox and Sulzby also noted the influence of mode of communication in their cross-sectional analysis of kindergarten and second grade children's told, dictated, and written reports of an actual observed event. In contrast to King and Rentel's observations, they found that the more closely associated the task was with oral conversation, the more likely were occurrences of exophora. Specifically, the telling and dictating tasks resulted in greater occurrences of inappropriate exophora than did the writing task. Their explanation was that children associated context-dependent language with the oral mode; therefore, tasks framed within this mode were more susceptible to context-dependent language, even though inappropriate in the particular situation, than were

tasks framed in the written mode. What is unclear is whether this phenomenon is an accurate representation of a developmental trend concerning autonomous language or a task-specific result. Because the King-Rentel study analyzed "made-up" stories and the Cox-Sulzby study analyzed reports of an actual observed event, the implication is that as tasks vary the probability of achieving autonomous text varies.

Visibility of referents has been offered as another factor influencing children's ability to use appropriate autonomous language for initial reference. In fact, this factor may explain in part the disparate results found in the King-Rentel and the Cox-Sulzby studies. In separate investigations of preschool children's use of referring expressions, Karmiloff-Smith (1979) and Maratsos (1976) reported that situations involving referents which were visible to the subject (e.g., game tasks) were more likely to result in inappropriate definite introductory phrases than were situations in which the referents were verbally-presented to the subjects (e.g., story tasks). This finding suggests that in retellings of stories, occurrences of felicitous character introductions would be greater in stories in which the story for retelling was only verbally presented than if the story for retelling was read from a picturebook. Also, the finding suggests that the construction of autonomous text in the Cox-Sulzby tasks was more difficult than in the King-Rentel tasks because the former entailed the retelling of an event in which the referents were visible to the subject; the latter presented no referents to the subject but directed them to make up their own. This distinction might be described as the difference between a reconstructive and a constructive process. In the framework of storytelling, the finding suggests the influence of a more general factor described as choice, the implication being that retellings would be more difficult to construct autonomously than would "made up" stories.

Given the identified developmental and task-specific factors contributing to the construction of autonomous language (i.e., egocentricism, mode, choice) and recognizing the functional nature of children's language development, it seems clear that an examination of children's character introductions must look beyond simple unidimensional interpretations and into dynamic interactions

found within the communication events. Further, it is apparent that such studies must not view the ability to construct audience-accommodating introductions as a skill achieved at a particular point in time, but as a skill which can be inhibited or facilitated by interactions between individual linguistic decisions as well as contextual factors.

Linguistic Variation in Marking Character Introductions

Although the above-mentioned studies have provided initial examinations of children's introductory phrases, they have analyzed only the relevant noun phrases (NPs) and primarily settled for coding schemes based on definiteness, assuming that indefinite NPs are equated with felicitous, or audience-accommodating, introductory phrases and definite NPs with infelicitous, or non-accommodating, introductory phrases. Recent linguistic work on referring expressions has shown such approaches to be inadequate. These works have shown that felicitous introductions are not restricted to indefinite references but may include definite, inferable introductions (Chafe, 1976; DuBois, 1980; Prince, 1981). The following set of clauses shows that characters may be inferable from previously-established characters.

1. Once upon a time there lived A BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS
2. THE QUEEN was very jealous

Because it is assumed to be common knowledge that the princess introduced in (1) would have a queen as a mother (or stepmother), "the queen" can be introduced with definite reference in (2) based on inferable information.

Similarly, the establishment of situational frames allows the introductions of characters with definite reference.

3. Once upon a time a princess was locked up
4. THE GUARD brought her a meal once a day

A "prison" frame is established in (3) and sets the stage for a definite introduction in (4) of "the guard."

DuBois (1980) also observed that character introductions can be introduced as definite if a possessive adjective or a relative clause provides identifying information. Prince (1981) made a similar observation, referring to this phenomenon as anchoring. This term is applied to cases in which the first mention of an entity is identifiable because it is anchored in a previously identified entity. Although Prince's examples were only of NPs connected to an identifiable entity via a relative clause, it seems reasonable to assume that anchoring would also include character introductions tied to identifiable entities through possessive articles as noted by DuBois as well as through prepositional phrases. The following clauses illustrate these three types of anchoring.

5. A princess and HER FAIRY GODMOTHER lived in a castle
6. THE KEEPER OF THE CASTLE was very nice
7. THE MAN WHO OWNED THE CASTLE was very mean

In (5) the new entity is related to a previously-introduced entity with the use of a possessive determiner. A prepositional phrase is used in (6) to anchor the new entity to the previously-established castle in (5). In (7) a relative clause which includes explicit reference to the castle in (5) provides the motivation for the felicitous introductory definite NP.

Definite introductions are also acceptable when the referent is a unique entity considered to be "common knowledge" (e.g., Spiderman, the Pope). These expressions are referred to by Halliday and Hasan (1976) as homophoric. A homophoric encoding of an introduction represents an identifiable status for a generalized audience and, therefore, can be considered as autonomous language.

Considering the variation in linguistic markings of felicitous character introductions and the implication that much information relevant to felicity lies beyond the analysis of the NP, the present study did not restrict analysis to the NP and coding definiteness of these phrases. Character introductions were analyzed as a NP within a clause within a text.

The Study

The present study analyzes the effects of development (Spring first grade, Fall second grade, Spring second grade), mode (oral, written), choice (retelling, "made up" story) and linguistic clause function (simple, complex) on children's success in constructing felicitous character introductions. The goals of the study were three-fold: (1) to describe the linguistic variation children employed in character introductions, (2) to identify cognitive factors other than egocentricism contributing to infelicitous introductions, and (3) to determine the significance of identified variables within the specified framework. The goals of the study required a combination of qualitative and quantitative analyses. Because character introductions in retellings could not vary to the same degree as character introductions in "made up" stories, the contrast in choice was analyzed using qualitative analysis.

Questions for Qualitative Analysis

1. What linguistic variations are used by children to achieve felicitous character introductions?
2. What linguistic variations result in failure to achieve felicity?
3. How does choice affect felicity of character introductions? Specifically, are infelicitous introductions more common in retellings than in "made-up" stories?
4. What cognitive factors (other than egocentricism) contribute to infelicity?

Questions for Quantitative Analysis

1. Do proportions of felicitous character introductions increase with development?
2. Are proportions of felicitous character introductions greater in dictated stories than in written stories?
3. Are proportions of felicitous character introductions greater for simple presentations (unifunctional) than for complex presentations (multifunctional)?

Methodology

The data base used in this study consisted of oral retellings (n = 108), dictated "made up" stories (n = 108), and written "made up" stories (n = 108). The texts were collected from 36 children during Spring of their first grade year, Fall of their second grade year, and Spring of their second grade year. Not only did these stories represent longitudinal data, but they also featured contrasts in mode (oral vs. written) and choice with oral mode held constant (make up a story vs. retell a story). Because the theoretical frame of the study included linguistic decisions of felicity, the unit of analysis was the character introduction rather than the text.

For the oral retelling task children retold the story from a storybook which was read to them. A different storybook, each representing a folktale, was used for each of the three collection periods. Squawk to the Moon, Little Goose by Edna Preston (Viking, 1974) was used for the first retelling. The Magic Porridge Pot by Paul Galdone (The Seabury Press, 1976) was used for the second collection, and Salt by Harvey Zemach (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1967) for the third collection.

Collection Procedures

For the oral retelling task, children were read the storybook then asked to tell the story to a research assistant who was not present at the reading. The children were informed that the "teacher" did not know the story and would like to hear it so that it could be shared with other children. In the dictation task, children were told to "make up your very own story" and that a "teacher" would write down the story for them. For the written story, the children were asked to write a "pretend" story. Both oral tasks (oral retelling and dictation) were tape recorded. To assure correct transcription of children's written work, children were asked to read their written stories to a research assistant upon completion. The research assistant took notes necessary to construct an accurate typed representation of the children's work.

Data Preparation

Transcripts for the two oral tasks (oral retelling and dictation) were constructed from the oral taped texts. Pauses, word and phrase repetitions, stuttering, corrections, false starts, and verbal interactions extraneous to the story (e.g., you like writing, don't you) were eliminated. Transcripts for the written task were constructed from the children's written works along with researcher notes. All transcripts were divided into T-units (Hunt, 1967). Character introductions were then identified using the following criteria:

> CHARACTER INTRODUCTION: The first discrete and unique textual mention of a referential-specific entity representing a human, an animal, or a personified object. Reference to group entities (e.g., some ducks) or individual entities partitioned from a previously-mentioned set (e.g., one of the ducks) were not included in the analysis.

The parameters of the introduction were defined as follows:

> PARAMETERS OF CHARACTER INTRODUCTION: If the new noun phrase (NP) is classified grammatically as a subject, object, or classifier of an independent clause, the parameters are equal to those of the independent clause. If the new NP is a subject, object, or classifier of a dependent clause, the parameters are equal to those of the dependent clause.

In cases of multiple new NPs within one clause, only new NPs with unique semantic roles and/or unique NP types were counted as separate character introductions. Multiple new NPs characterized by identical semantic roles and the same NP type were counted as one character introduction. Examples of multiple new NPs within a single clause are given in Table 1. A 99% rate of agreement was achieved by two coders in the identification of character introductions.

Analysis

Qualitative questions concerned with linguistic variation were addressed by systematically comparing and contrasting the appropriate subset of character introductions. Quantitative questions were analyzed using logit log-linear analysis. Although the repeated measures inherent in the data set violates the assumption of independence underlying log linear, this procedure is the only statistical analysis for frequency data which recognizes interaction effects. Unlike the posi-

tive bias associated with repeated measures in analysis of variance, the use of chi-square based analyses with repeated measures results in the retention of the null hypothesis more than it should (Kennedy, 1983). Thus, the log-linear procedure was used but acknowledged as a conservative analysis.

Results and Discussion of Qualitative Analysis

Variation in Felicitous Introductions

An analysis of the felicitous character introductions revealed that the range of linguistic variation identified in the literature was present in the constructed stories of primary-grade children. Indefinite NPs were used as were definite NPs representing inferable, anchored, and homophoric entities. Two additional types of definite and felicitous character introductions were also identified in the data.

First, the use of an unidentifiable proper name was observed as a conventional, felicitous, and definite character introduction. The following examples from the data illustrate this phenomenon.

8. One sunny morning SUSAN and MARIE came running out of their houses
9. MOTHER GOOSE was putting on her hat and shawl
10. TOBY THE TOMCAT was his best friend

The unidentifiable proper names used for character introductions were sometimes common "people" names as seen in (8), but more often were descriptive names for animals as seen in (9)-(10). Although the use of a proper name to represent an unknown referent is theoretically infelicitous, the practice is accepted as a common linguistic technique among storytellers. And it is clear that primary-grade children have implicit knowledge of this technique and put it to use.

The use of the first-person pronoun "I" was also observed as another form of an acceptable definite introduction. Interestingly, even though third-person pronominalizations were observed, they were rare and many of these were self-corrected (e.g., But well THEY--I mean THE PEOPLE ON THE PLANET--didn't actually think it's valuable). In comparison, the use of the first-person

pronoun for character introductions was common, indicating that primary-grade children have implicit knowledge of the different rules governing introductions of first- and third-person entities.

The descriptive analysis showing the linguistic variation for primary-grade children's character introductions indicates that children's early attempts at storytelling involve the same range of linguistic options implicitly available to adult storytellers. Even though the young storytellers encounter more difficulty in manipulating the full range of options than would be expected of their adult counterparts, the data suggest that children prefer to operate in this complexity rather than opt for only the most basic forms of character introductions.

Variation in Infelicitous Introductions

An analysis of the infelicitous character introductions showed that definite introductions do not constitute the whole of infelicitous character introductions. Indefinite introductions were observed which "looked" felicitous within the boundaries of their NPs, but which were infelicitous due to surrounding clausal and/or textual problems. Following is the constructed classifications of problematic indefinite introductions.

(a) Orphaned set members: Indefinite introductions such as "one of the ducklings got out of bed" which look felicitous within their clausal environments but which have no previously established set entity to permit anchoring.

(b) Dangling introductions: Indefinite introductions such as "and then A DUCK ran out" which have an ambiguous link to a textually established set ("Once upon a time there were SOME DUCKS").

(c) Redundant introductions: Indefinite introductions such as "And the snake knew A FRIEND MOUSE" which are preceded by introduction of the same referent ("One winter day there was a rabbit, a snake, and A MOUSE").

(d) Context-anchored introductions: Indefinite introductions such as "The first picture was A DUCK" which are infelicitously anchored to a referent unknown to the audience.

(e) Incomplete introductions: Indefinite introductions such as "Once these poor people" which are grammatically incomplete.

(f) Faulty omniscient introductions: Indefinite introductions such as "He didn't see A FOX" which on first reading indicate a non-introduction (reference to a non-referential entity, not a specific fox). Subsequent text, however, shows that a referential-specific interpretation was intended.

The qualitative analysis of infelicitous character introductions also revealed a variety of problems with definite introductions. Following is the constructed classifications for problematic definite introductions.

(g) Mind-meld introductions: Definite introductions representing the inappropriate assumption that the audience shares storyteller knowledge through a mystical "mind-meld." This form is interpreted commonly as the result of an egocentric perspective.

(h) Foiled inferable introductions: Definite introductions which fail due to a lack of necessary textual background information. A common occurrence of this type of infelicitous introduction was found in the retellings of Salt when "the king" was introduced without the background information that the main character sailed to a kingdom across the sea.

(i) Unclaimed relatives: Definite introductions such as "THE MOM was cleaning the tub" which failed to be explicitly anchored to the appropriate textual referent (a little boy).

(j) Relationally absurd introductions: Definite introductions such as "There was a girl and HIS WIFE" which are impossible to interpret due to a confusion of kinship terms.

(k) Chameleon introductions: Ambiguous definite introductions of a character which may have already been introduced but which have been transformed in some manner. Observations included "skunks" being abruptly referred to as "the squirrels"; the changing of names; and third-person entities being transformed into first-person entities.

The analysis of variation within infelicitous character introductions showed unequivocally that children's failure to achieve an autonomous introduction cannot be attributed simply to an egocentric perspective. The identified issues force interpretations which consider the range of linguistic options the children are dealing with.

The Effect of Choice

The preliminary prediction that retellings would be more susceptible to infelicitous character introductions than "made up" stories was based on the conceptualization of a retelling as a process involving representation of externally-defined referents as opposed to internally-constructed referents. Even though the preliminary prediction was supported, the qualitative analysis showed that the initial interpretation was not sufficient.

Although the full range of linguistic variation was observed in each of the tasks, the fact that several of the infelicitous classifications (i.e., orphaned set members, faulty omniscient introductions, foiled inferable introductions, relationally absurd introductions) were found only in retellings suggested that felicitous character introductions were more difficult to achieve in retellings than in "made up" stories due to the nature of the content they represented. With the exception of the definite mind-meld introduction, problematic introductions across all tasks were linked with the complexity of the plot and the interrelationships of the characters. Retellings, however, were observed to be by far more complex in plot and in cast of characters than were the "made up" stories, thus resulting in a greater number of problematic introductions. Proportions of felicitous and infelicitous character introductions in retellings were not compared to those in dictated and written "made up" stories using inferential statistics, but descriptive statistics supported the conclusion that retelling tasks inhibit rather than facilitate children's creation of autonomous text. Infelicitous introductions in retellings composed one-third of total introductions; infelicitous introductions in both dictated and written "made-up" stories composed approximately one-fifth of total introductions. It was concluded that felicitous character introductions are more difficult to achieve in retellings than in "made up" stories because (1) they represent a reconstruction process as opposed to a construction process and (2) they are embedded in a more complex plot and in a more complex cast than constructed in most of the "made up" stories.

The Effect of Task Interpretation

Although the same three tasks were given to each child at each of the three collection periods, this procedure did not guarantee that all the children shared the same interpretation of these tasks. An observable difference in the interpretation of the retelling task can be seen in the initial excerpts from two renditions of Squawk to the Moon, Little Goose.

> It's the story of Little Duck...The first picture was the mother was getting ready to go out to Mrs. Hen's house...

> Well, once upon a time there was three ducklings...And they had a mother--like every other gosling would...

The author of the first text appears to be most concerned with sequencing the story correctly. The pictures are used as a sort of visual outline. The author of the second retelling, however, appears to be more concerned with creating a story-like text. The material of the original story is recounted using story language such as "once upon a time" and "like every other X would."

Different task interpretations were also observed in the "made up" stories. The following example started out as a story, but the child author transformed the task into a counting activity.

> Once there was ten little bears. Then they saw somebody coming down the street to get them. Then one little bear got away. Then two little bears got away. Then four, then five, then six, then seven, then eight, then nine, then ten, then eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two.

Different conceptualizations of "story" were also found within the "made up" dictated and written texts. While some children developed their plots through actions of one or two characters, other children sustained their stories by character introductions alone.

> Once upon a time there was a reindeer. Along came a rabbit. Then along came a horse. And then they met a dog. And then they met a cow. And then along came a chicken. Then came a duck.

These observations suggest that success in achieving felicitous character introductions is linked in important ways to the child's interpretation of the task and to the child's conceptualization of how to develop a story.

Results and Discussion of Quantitative Findings

In order to accommodate the three questions for quantitative study in one analysis, the coding of felicity (felicitous, infelicitous) and clause functions (simple presentation, complex presentation) were combined into a single response variable with four levels: simple/felicitous, complex/felicitous, simple/infelicitous, complex/infelicitous. This variable, introduction type, was used as the response variable in a logit log-linear analysis. Introductions which were either automatically felicitous ("I" representing storyteller participant) or automatically non-felicitous (context-anchored and incomplete introductions) were not included in the analysis because they were not free to vary across the four response levels. A 97.8% rate of agreement was achieved between two coders in the classification of introduction type. Proportions of the logit were examined across levels of mode (oral, written) and development (Spring grade 1, Fall grade 2, Spring grade 2).

Table 2 shows that the only model with a residual L^2 signifying an acceptable fit ($p < .05$) was the saturated model. This model included a first-order logit interaction between development and mode. Although the component L^2 was significant for the main effects model due to development, the residual L^2 showed that the model did not fit the data well. This suggested that development was an important variable but needed to be examined in the context of the saturated model.

Lambdas and proportions for the saturated model are presented in Table 3. The results showed that proportional differences in introduction type between the two levels of mode were significant only at the first observation (Spring grade 1) and only for complex/felicitous introductions ($z = 2.824$). The patterns of proportions at Spring grade 1 showed that a complex presentation was used felicitously in 29% of the character introductions in dictated stories but only in 5% of the character introductions in written stories. Proportions of the remaining levels of introduction type were similar at Spring grade 1. All proportions representing levels of introduction type were similar at Fall grade 2 and at Spring grade 2.

The similarity of the proportions across the two levels of mode within levels of development (with the exception of Spring grade 1) indicated that a closer look at the proportions of introduction

type across levels of development (collapsing mode) was warranted, a main effect noted in the model selection stage as well as in the review of research. Table 4 shows that in the main effect model for development the observed proportion of felicitous complex presentations was significantly less than expected at Spring grade 1 (z = -3.777) but significantly greater than expected at Spring grade 2 (z = 3.357). No other proportions resulted in a significant difference. These findings indicate that development contributes to a much greater extent to difference in successful use of complex presentations than of simple presentations. This conclusion is graphically illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

A contrast of felicitous and infelicitous proportions shown in Figure 1 reveals, as expected, that felicitous character introductions increased slightly and infelicitous character introduction decreased slightly over time. What was more interesting, however, was the relative contributions of simple presentations and complex presentations to the increase in felicitous character introductions. While proportions of felicitous simple introductions remained relatively stable, Figure 2 plots a steady growth in children's use of complex presentations to achieve felicity. These figures indicate that the developmental trend showing increased proportions of felicity was not due to an increase in simple presentations--children appeared to be quite capable of introducing a character felicitously at the first observation if they were focusing only on one function, namely to introduce a character. The increase was better characterized by an increased ability to felicitously encode multiple story functions (e.g., an introduction and an action) into a complex presentation.

Conclusion

The study shows that children enter school capable of using the linguistic channel to create contexts within text in some situations. Although developmental increases were observed which were partially attributed to the loss of an egocentric perspective, the analysis also led to the following conclusions:

1. **Using a variety of introductory linguistic options results in an increased possibility of ambiguity.**

   The study showed that a wide range of introductory linguistic options are implicitly known and used by young storytellers. This use of this range of options results not only in varied introductions but also in increased opportunities to produce ambiguous reference. Specifically, the use of sophisticated strategies such as inferable and anchored introductions were often embedded in insufficient textually-presented information. Interestingly, children appeared to chose to deal with this complexity rather than to restrict themselves to only simple, straightforward introductions.

2. **Recreating the context of a story once heard is more difficult than creating the context for a "made up" story.**

   The findings suggested that many children find it difficult to dismiss a verbal- or visual-casting of story characters by someone else and to "begin again" for another audience. Because in the retelling tasks the children were first audiences then storytellers, a reconstruction process was necessary. Children did not have to deal with a reconstruction process in "made up" stories, however. Reference frames for these stories needed only to be constructed.

3. **Creating unambiguous introductions becomes more difficult as the complexity of the story increases.**

   The analysis indicated that retellings were more susceptible to infelicity due to complexity of the story cast or story plot. When children were required to cope with numerous characters in a complex plot, the result was an increased degree of infelicitous introductions. When allowed to generate their own material, children usually set reasonable limits, creating stories which were simple in plot and limited in cast; the result was an increased degree of felicitous introductions.

4. **Increased use by primary-grade children of audience-accommodating character introductions in situations requiring autonomous text is due primarily to an increasing ability to commandeer the multifunctional nature of language.**

Although a general increase in use of felicitous character introductions was observed, this increase reflected greater use of felicitous complex presentations. Support for this interpretation was observed in the data. Numerous occurrences of transition multifunctional clauses were observed in which children were seemingly unable to integrate the presentational and the descriptive functions and thus opted for introducing the character then pronominalizing the entity--all in the same clause--in order to ascribe the action, state, or location. Observed introductory clauses such as "THIS MAN HE was on the boat" and "Once upon a time there THESE THREE BOYS THEY lived near a river" illustrate this phenomenon.

5. **Initial attempts to communicate in the written mode are characterized by a temporary regression in language fluency, including creating context within text.**

Dealing with the new transcription demands of the written mode diverts attention from audience-accommodating strategies used in the oral mode. Interestingly, in this study, the regression was observed only in children's ability to create multifunctional presentations and this difference was restricted to the first grade year. Modal differences were not observed for simple presentations at any period nor for complex presentations at any of the second grade collection periods. Assuming that most children do not engage in writing stories prior to Grade 1, the findings indicate that after one year of exploring writing as a medium, the language sophistication of character introductions produced in the oral mode is matched by the sophistication of the character introductions produced in the written mode. This finding is a testimony to children's ability to adapt to and exploit a new communication mode.

6. **Different interpretations of literacy tasks result in the application of varied criteria among children.**

Some children seemed to interpret the retelling task as a memory check and, therefore, showed little concern for accommodating the storytelling event to the informational needs of an audience. Other children seemed to interpret the written "made up" story task as an assignment which would be evaluated according to correct spelling. Although neither of these criteria were intended, they obviously guided the text creations of some of the children. These observations lead to the conclusion that a closer alignment of teacher and student interpretations of literacy tasks should result in increased autonomy of the language when appropriate.

The findings support the view that literacy development cannot be analyzed as a step-wise addition of skills but must be analyzed as a dynamic process involving interactions between multiple social, linguistic, and cognitive dimensions. Further research is need which explores other aspects of literacy development within multidimensional frameworks.

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TABLE 1

Examples of Counting Procedures
for Character Introductions

Immediate Clausal Environment	Number	Explanation
A FOX ate A GOOSE	2	Different semantic roles; Same NP type
A BOY and HIS MOTHER went for a walk	2	Same semantic role; Different NP type
A FOX and A BEAR went for a walk	1	Same semantic role; Same NP type

TABLE 2

Summary of Logit-Model Analysis:
Introduction Type by Development by Mode

		Residual			Component		
Model	Fitted Marginals	df	L^2	p	df	L^2	p
(1)	DM,I	15	49.19	.000			
(2)	DM,DI	9	27.80	.001	6	21.39	.002
(3)	DM,DI,MI	6	20.67	.002	3	7.13	.068
(4)	DMI	0	0.00	1.000	6	20.67	.002

TABLE 3

Lambdas and Proportions for Introduction Type
by Development by Mode

Intro. Type (n = 698)	Spring Grade 1				Fall Grade 2				Spring Grade 2			
	Written (f=41)		Dictated (f=124)		Written (f=67)		Dictated (f=160)		Written (f=95)		Dictated (f=211)	
	λ	p	λ	p	λ	p	λ	p	λ	p	λ	p
SP/Fel	-.070	.46	.070	.53	.244	.66	-.244	.56	-.174	.41	.174	.52
CP/Fel	-.564*	.05	.564*	.29	.277	.24	-.277	.31	.287	.43	-.287	.35
Sp/Infel	.329	.07	-.329	.04	-.425	.00	.425	.03	.096	.01	-.096	.01
CP/Infel	.305	.44	-.305	.38	-.096	.10	.096	.11	-.209	.15	.209	.12

* Significant at the .05 level (9 independent z tests. .05/9 = .006, critical z value = 2.75)

TABLE 4

Lambdas and Proportions for Introduction Type by Development

Intro Type (n=698)	Spring Grade 1 (f=165) λ	p	Fall Grade 2 (f=227) λ	p	Spring Grade 2 (f=306) λ	p
SP/Fel	-.194	.51	.267	.58	-.073	.48
CP/Fel	-.755*	.23	.241	.29	.513*	.37
SP/Infel	.624	.05	-.281	.03	-.344	.02
CP/Infel	.324	.21	-.228	.11	-.096	.13

* Significant at .05 (6 independent z tests, .05/6 = .008, critical z value = 2.65)

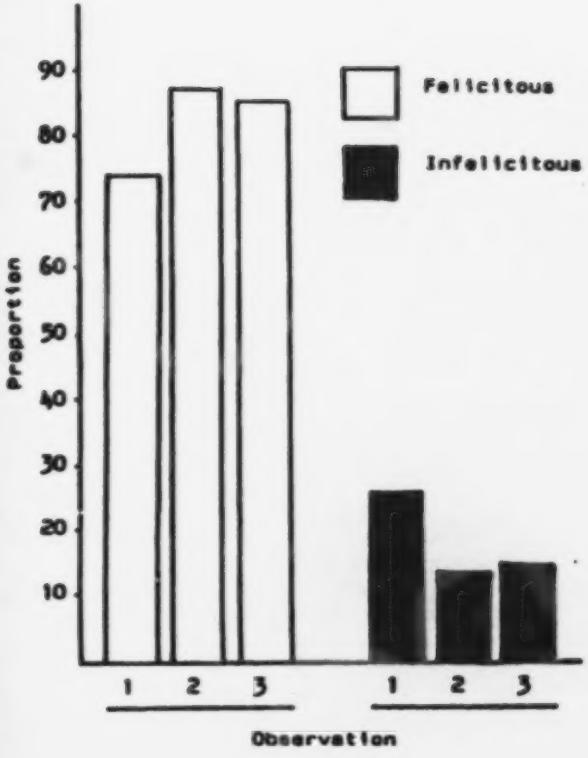

Figure 1: The Proportion of Felicity as a Function of Observation Time

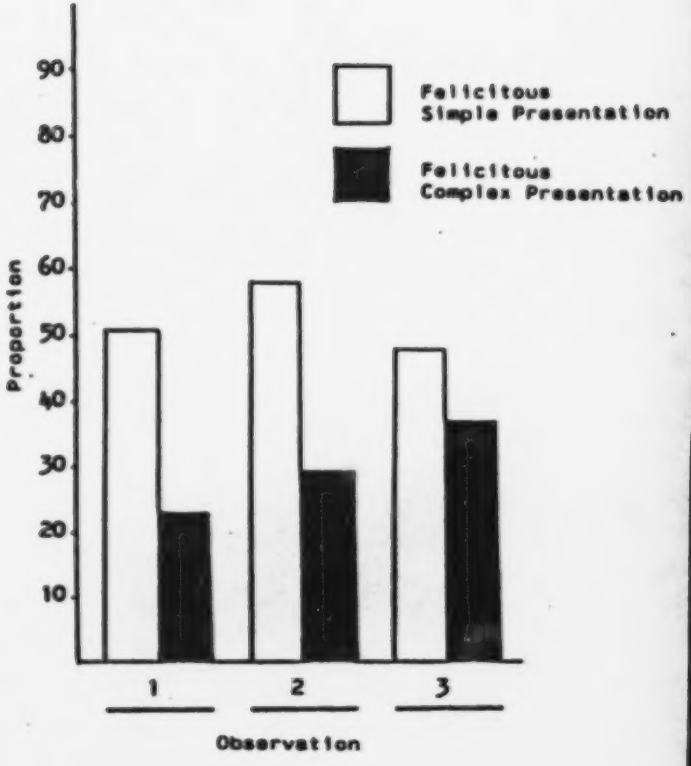

Figure 2: The Proportion of Felicitous Character Introductions as a Function of Introduction Type